

SERIAL STORY

The Women's Candidate

By BYRON WILLIAMS

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SYNOPSIS.

In a spirit of fun Mayor Bedight, a summer visitor, is chased through the woods by ten laughing girls, one of whom he catches and kisses.

CHAPTER II.—Continued.

The court hesitated. Finally, turning to the witness, Judge Vining asked:

"What were the sounds like?" a flame of color lighting up her face.

The mayor made a mental note of the color.

"Well," began the witness soberly, "it sounded like—the old pass-word of the Elks—'Jolly corks!'"

"Pulled?" demanded the judge, resigning herself to sacrifice.

"Yes, your honor—and smothered in honey!"

"That will do!" determined the judge, hiding her eyes behind her handkerchief. "Harriet Brooks," ignoring the state's attorney, "will you take the stand?"

The prisoner arose from his soap box.

"Your honor," he said gallantly, "in deference to Mine Host, from whose culinary department there wafts to me the unctuous call of fried eggs and waffles, and because of the delicate situation the victim of my assault may find herself in should the case proceed, I have determined to plead guilty and throw myself upon the mercy of the court. I—I am guilty as charged. Guilty, I say—and proud of it!"

He sat down soberly, but his eyes were fastened on the face of the judge. She turned upon him fiercely.

"For this unseemly conduct, I, the judge, fine you ten days at Squirrel Inn. Beginning tomorrow morning, you will be the servile slave of the ten young women whose feelings you have outraged. Tomorrow you will start alphabetically down the list and for a day you will do the bidding of the girl who falls to your lot. Whatever she instructs you to do, you will do. Should you again transgress you will be—be fined for life!" savagely.

"If, at the end of the ten days, you have acquitted yourself honorably, you may go your way in peace. Have you anything to say for yourself?"

His honor arose submissively.

"I accept the terms," he said, eagerly. "I protest—but I accept."

"And should you desert," continued the judge, "I shall not hesitate to use this evidence against you!" pulling from the front of her shirtwaist a bulky document. "Possibly you may recognize it!" tauntingly.

The prisoner gasped.

"My bill!"

"Yes!" replied the judge, piercing him with a cold look of scorn, "you may well say, 'My bill!'"

He bowed his head.

"Court's adjourned!" snapped the judge. "Breakfast is served."

CHAPTER III.

A jest is a jest, but the following letter, received by "His Honor, the Mayor" next morning, suggested a straw too much for the Asiatic ruminant's back. Tersely, it said:

"Squirrel Inn,
"Sunday Morning.

"Mr. Walter Bedight,

"Mayor of Ossian:

"Dear Sir: The levity of your demeanor at yesterday's trial and the ostensibly nonchalant attitude you chose to take of the sentence inflicted, leads me to believe that you are considering this very serious matter altogether too lightly. Under ordinary circumstances a handsome trifter might ride into a woman's camp like Lochinvar, boldly grasp a pretty girl in his arms and kiss her, without paying a more severe penalty than the scorn of the camp and a few surface scratches. And even you, evidently a gentleman as well as a politician, might have escaped with a fitting rebuke had you been luckier. Unencumbered by baggage and feeling unbound by our court to remain, you could have drifted away into the evening shadows and laughed at our efforts to restrain you.

"But, Mr. Bedight, as a candidate for representative at the coming election, for which you are evidently recouping your vital forces in this tranquil spot, you will scarcely desert while we have in our possession a document so incriminating as that found by us yesterday in your wake through the dogwood swamp.

"The document itself is evidence enough, if given publicly, to lose you the votes of almost every woman in the district. Such treachery as you have in mind—the drafting of a bill against woman's suffrage—will not be

countenanced by the fair voters of this land, once the facts are in their possession!

"I trust you realize the enormity of your crime and the hold we have on you. Should you be unwise enough to violate the sentence of this court, the news of your duplicity will be sent to the women's clubs of your district, to be followed by unimpeachable evidence in your own handwriting—the bill itself. I am satisfied that your better judgment will prevail and that you will serve your sentence as becomes a gentleman and a candidate. This being Sunday, you will be allowed your liberty to go and come as you please and fortify your mind against the ordeal you are about to experience. On Monday morning you will inaugurate your sentence by beginning with Mae Andrews, whose name appears first on the alphabetical list. Mae is a stunning blonde with hair like spun flax and cheeks like the down of an Alberta peach. She is city broke and a high stepper, has a dozen Beau Brummels infatuated and loves to see enamored men turn somersaults in the service of the queenly sex. You will do what she tells you—even to jumping through a hoop, should she demand it.

"For purposes of assignment, I give you herewith the list of your owners and the days of your servitude, as follows:

"Monday, Mae Andrews.
"Tuesday, Mabel Arney
"Wednesday, Harriet Brooks
"Thursday, Margaret Farnsworth
"Friday, Alice Mason
"Saturday, Molly McConnell
"Sunday—open date for repentance
"Monday, Cleo Summers
"Tuesday, Lucille Walters
"Wednesday, Bess Winters
"Thursday, 'Jack' Vining
"It comes to your knowledge that you are very desirous of reaching your district on the Saturday night following, where you are to open your campaign. Should you prove yourself a perfect gentleman during the interim and serve your sentence with due humility, we will return to you the incriminating bill and permit you to depart in peace.

"But for every indiscretion on your part, you will be given a ten days' sentence under the same conditions now governing. The court has endeavored to impress you with the seriousness of your situation and shall feel no regret should you, in your heedlessness, fail to grasp its import. Given this day and date under my letter seal at Squirrel Inn, Dingledale, Wisconsin.

"JACK Vining, Judge."

Walter Bedight, mayor and candidate for the legislature, frowned. Plainly, here was a predicament. The humor of the situation had fled. The plucked attitude of the "judge" toward him was plain. It was more than this, it was "catty." She ran after him and he kissed her, a perfectly natural thing for a handsome bachelor to do if the pursuer were pretty—and goodness knows Jackie Vining was enough of that to give almost any inquisitive young man palpitation of the heart!

But even male judges have a way of their own, absolute and unrelenting, while a woman judge, pretty, vivacious, enticing, captured in a dogwood swamp and kissed against her will—Bedight shuddered at his possible fate!

The fury of a woman osculated is frequently as accentuated as the anger of a woman scorned! And he was the goat!

Deep in a quandary of ways and means, the luckless politician, mentally berating the fatal day of woman suffrage, wandered into the cool, umbrageous wood.

It was midsummer and the forest was a sylvan retreat where monk and man might lose his troubles in the rippling of the rills and receive divine unction from the nature god ruling with soothing zephyrs and elixirs of efflorescence.

Bedight penetrated far into the heart of the wood, where dryads romp along the sunbeamed way through interstices in the trees, where mother brown thrushes peep from



"Jackie" Vining.

sheltered nests and frisking squirrels chatter of the hickory nuts ripening upon the scraggly trees.

And then he saw her!

Like Psyche, she stooped beside a quiet pool, above her spreading branches of a water elm. Beside her on the brink the harebell grew and to her ear there came from down below the rhythmic cadence of a brooklet's song, the same song that, in crescendo or diminuendo, it had sung for centuries, the ever chanted, perpetual song of the brook!

He stole softly forward on tip-toe. Absorbed in her mood, she gave no

heed. The rich outline of her figure thrilled him and on her golden hair the sheen of the morning radiated like a halo on the head of a Titian masterpiece. Step by step he drew near, cautiously. Little by little he crept forward until he stood with his hand upon the trunk of a tree. And then, quietly, fearlessly, he stepped behind her, his shadow falling over her shoulder upon the placid waters of the pool.

With a cry of alarm she sprang to her feet and faced him. He stood his ground boldly, but in his eyes there was an appeal.

"Forgive me," he said evenly. "I—you needed the shadow of a man to complete the picture."

"You flatter yourself," she replied coldly.

He started to speak, impulsively, to plead for forgiveness, but she held up her hand mandatorily.

"I hold no conversation with prisoners outside of court," she said, austere.

Turning from the pool, she stood before him as one in authority.

"I am going. Wait here. Do not follow me," she admonished.

He sat down beside the pool. As he did so, for a fleeting moment the form of a lithe and graceful woman fell over his shoulders upon the drowsy waters—but the face was turned toward the backward trail.

"Everything—even mythology—is twisted," he growled, "in these parlous days of woman suffrage."

He turned his head to catch a glimpse of her, flitting through the trees, but unlike Lot's wife, she did not look back.

The mayor sighed.

"What an awful mess a man can get into," he sorrowed, "through the perfectly harmless diversion of kissing!"

CHAPTER IV.

Monday morning dawned with a purple glow that melted into molten



"Guilty, I Say, and Proud of It."

glory as the sun came up and painted the hills and valleys with delight. Flute notes of harmony thrilled from fitting birds and the incense of fragrant flowers gave joy to the olfactory nerves as his honor, the mayor and Mae Andrews tripped down the front steps of Squirrel Inn and made for the boat landing, the girl in the lead, the man behind, carrying a lunch basket and fishing tackle.

"Do you really and truly believe, Mr. Bedight," bubbled the girl over her shoulder, "that there are just as good fish in the sea as have ever been caught?"

The mayor laid down his burden on the dock and smiled confidently into the pretty face of his interrogator.

"An unmarried man," he began, carefully, "would answer yes; a married man, most assuredly, would deny the allegation and say no."

The young woman, with a glance of mischief in her eyes, asked innocently:

"And you?"

"I would say, if a prisoner might express himself without implication," questioningly, "that it depends upon the bait!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Ghost Gave the Tip.

An extraordinary story of a gambling "tip" from the regions of spirits is that of Signor Crotta, the station-master at Cicignano, near Naples. Signor Crotta speculated one franc at a weekly lottery, and now finds himself in consequence the lucky winner of \$120,000. On learning the good tidings Crotta's first task was to telegraph to the directorate of the State Railways his resignation. He is a married man, and has a daughter who is a local schoolmistress. The station-master is also setting apart a sum for masses on behalf of his dead aunt, whose ghost, he avows, appeared to him in the early hours of the fateful morning bidding him gamble on four numbers which she revealed to him, all of which eventually proved lucky ones.

Seaweed Made Valuable.

It is estimated that those engaged in the industry of gathering seaweed and reducing it to gelatinous food in Japan alone number 600,000 persons. Within recent years seaweeds have been introduced into the English kitchen. The edible species, served with roast meats, have been found to be very palatable. Devonshire and Japanese seaweeds are employed largely in the London industry.

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The Women's Candidate

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SYNOPSIS.

In a spirit of fun Mayor Bedight, a summer visitor, is chased through the woods by ten laughing girls, one of whom he catches and kisses. The girls form themselves into a court and sentence him to do the bidding of one of their number each day for ten days. A legislative measure opposing woman suffrage, which dropped from the mayor's pocket, is used to compel him to obey the mandates of the girls.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

She took her seat in the boat and Bedight pushed off. The east was a riot of effulgence and the lapping waves broke in crested turrets of gold as they gurgled and splashed on their way to meet the boat. Rowing steadily, the mayor studied the face of the girl opposite—the face of a patrician, softened by clear blue, kindly eyes and beautified by amorous red lips. Unconsciously Bedight caught himself mentally reading:

"With thy red lips, redder still,
Kissed by strawberries on the hill—"

He drew the boat to a shady spot along the beach and rigged a pole for her.

"Bait it!" she commanded, dropping her magazine.

"Bacon rind, minnows, frogs or worms?" he questioned, hook in hand.

"You have just said it depends upon the bait, now bait it," she admonished curtly.

"But what do you want to catch?" he insisted.

"Fish!"

He took up an angleworm and impaled it on the hook, while the girl watched him, fascinated.

"I—I never could do that. Ugh! But men are wretches!"

For answer he threw the line into the water and handed her the rod.

"Oh!" she screamed, pulling nervously at a bright-eyed perch with Tyrian-red fins.

"Let him have it a bit," cautioned the mayor.

"Oh, that is the way you fish for fish, too?" she exclaimed. "Why, how funny!"

He nodded.

"Now, see that! He's taken all the bait and gone away," ruefully. "And you told me to wait!"

"A fish and a man should be landed at exactly the right moment," he advised, seriously, avoiding her eyes. "If trifled with too long, either is apt to get away with the—er, bait!"

"Thank you," she replied coldly. "I know how to do it now."

In a trice she had a flopping beauty to the boat.

He rebated her hook and, picking up his rod, sent a Dowagiac spinning through the air. It fell just without a bed of moss. There followed a splash, a neat turn of the wrist, a whirling of the reel and a cry from the girl:

"Oh, give it to me! Give it to me! Let me land him!"

Obediently Bedight handed her the rod. The fish darted and plunged. She reeled in frantically. The mayor smiled. The fish, a black bass of three pounds, came into view of the



"Let Him Have It a Bit."

boat. The fisherlady squealed with delight—but the fish, seeing his tormentors, made a desperate break for liberty. The woman, gripping the rod firmly, resisted the attack, whereat the hook tore loose and the dangle

bait flew high in the air above her head!

"Oh, isn't that too bad!" she exclaimed, disappointment shadowing her pretty face.

"When you have hooked a fish or a man," he began quietly, "and either shows a disposition to plunge, give a little time. Keep a bait but not too restless hold. When the fury of the plunge is over, reel in cautiously. If you do this, the man or the fish will always come back captive."

"I never have had occasion to need your advice," she said simply.

"I see you are a novice at—fishing," he said, patronizingly.

She colored.

"I haven't found it necessary, or desirable, sir, to become overly proficient!" proudly.

"But your husband—" he said, as he threw out his line, "may prove—"

"Pardon me," she spoke haughtily. "My husband, should I ever have one, will not be the sort that will need to be called back. He—"

"Of course not," he said in a conciliatory voice. "They never are—until after marriage."

He was struggling now with a gamy Oswego, which he landed finally by jumping from the boat and skimming it in on the sandy beach.

As he did so, a rough fellow with a nondescript slouch hat pulled scoop-shovel fashion over his face and dressed in the typical native style, sprang from behind a clump of bushes and bawled:

"I thought so. Gol darn ye, you're under arrest!"

The mayor looked at this new custodian with growing interest. The fellow was long and lank and weather-beaten. The type was recognizable at first glance. Undoubtedly he was the local game warden, a shiftless ne'er-do-well, appointed by a not too discriminating politician during a hot campaign.

"What's the charge, officer?" asked Bedight, unhooking the fish and standing over it as it flopped upon the sand.

The warden, swelling with importance, cleared his throat for action.

"That there fishin' tackle o' yours has got gang hooks on it, which is agin the law. You'll haf t' come with me, mister."

The mayor whistled.

"Got a copy of the law with you?" he asked, with a careful show of respect.

The warden plunged into his coat pocket and brought forth a paper-covered booklet, distributing on the wind



Mae Andrews.

as he did so flecks of tobacco, matches and silver foil.

"Here 'tis," he grunted, triumphantly. "Right there—section 7, 'Fishin' in Season,'" pointing with a grimy thumb.

Bedight read the section in question.

"All right, officer; I guess I'll have to go," he agreed, good-naturedly, a happy thought gripping him enticingly.

The girl in the boat screamed.

"Don't you dare go away. If you do, I'll—we'll send that bill to Ossian!"

The mayor groaned.

"Come on!" ordered the warden impatiently. "I ain't got no time to be argin' with skirts. You've violated the law an' I reckon you'll haf to pay th' fiddler."

Bedight reached to the beach as if to pick up his fish. Instead, he reached six inches farther, took a quick, strong hold on the bottom of one leg of the warden's trousers, gave a mighty tug upward and, as the disconcerted native turned a somersault in midair, broke for the boat. Seeing his evident intent, Miss Andrews encouraged the leap, but alas for human precision! In his rush he struck the gunwale, there was a clatter, a scream and the next instant Miss Andrews found herself to seven feet of water. She came up with a gasp and would have swum to safety, for she was athletic, but the mayor, in the same predicament, came gallantly to the rescue, carrying her to shore in his arms, where he gingerly deposited her on the warm sand.

The outraged warden, fully believing that Providence had become his ally, and delivered into his hands the resisting criminal, strode forward and tapped Bedight authoritatively on the shoulder.

"Serves ye right, darn ye. Now you come along with me!"

For answer Bedight prouetted in the sand and, swinging hard, gave the native a terrific smack on the jaw with the flat of his hand. With a bowl of pain and outraged pride that official turned ignominiously and ran for cover, bawling threats of revenge as he sped toward the village.

In her wet and dripping clothes the girl sank precipitately upon the sand and gave vent to screams of hysterical

laughter. Under the influence of her rare good humor, Bedight's seriousness melted—and he, too, dropped upon the beach and reviewed the ludicrous side of the situation in hearty guffawing.

"But we've got to get out of here," finally protested the mayor, his face sobering. "I know these country constable fellows. That warden will be back here in an hour with enough native talent to arrest a company of night riders. It's time for us to move on."

He righted the boat and collected



"Come Back Here, Gol Darn Ye, an' Git Arrested!"

the fishing rods. The lunch basket was hooked with a clever twist and brought to shore.

"I'm not going to move a step from here," she declared firmly as she faced about on the beach, "until I—I wring out this awful wet skirt!" blushing.

He looked at the dress thoughtfully.

It was dripping water all about her. Then his eyes fell upon her big sunshade. Without a word he picked it up, walked down the dry beach and stuck it in the sand, its dome at an angle of forty-five degrees. Then he came back and sat down on the prow of the boat, his back to the umbrella.

The girl looked at him and then at the umbrella.

"Do you promise not to peek?" in a confused voice.

"I'm the sphinx," he said, quietly.

"Take your time—and get it good and dry. Er—hang it on the umbrella, you know—where the sun can get at it."

He heard her soft footfalls in the sand—and waited. He waited a long time. Once he almost forgot and was at the point of viewing the landscape in her general direction, when he heard a discreet cough and jerked his head about-face, giving himself up to the cantankerous conduct of a fish hawk pestering a kingfisher, much to the vociferous annoyance of the latter, who chattered angrily.

And then from the weedy country road behind the hill there came voices. The warden and his assistants were returning.

Would the girl never reappear?

Rushing toward the hill, the mayor waved his arms and shouted:

"Go back, you fellows! Go back, there's a lady dressing! There's—"

"On, Mr. Bedight," cried a clear voice from the rear, "I'm ready."

The mayor turned and ran precipitately down the hill, the natives in full pursuit. But this time he reached the boat in safety and flung a derisive laugh at the angry warden's peremptory command to:

"Come back here, gol darn ye, an' git arrested!"

The girl watched the man narrowly.

"If you don't mind, Mr. Bedight, we'll go over on the lee side of the island. There's a nice warm beach over there and while I investigate the condition of this lunch we can dry out a bit. I'm not going back to that hotel in the daylight!"

It was dusk when the two climbed up the steps of the Squirrel Inn. The judge came forward officially to receive the report.

"He's—he's a perfect gentleman," whispered Mae to Jackie as she slipped by to her room.

On the beach of Arrow Island, on the leeward side, two sand hummocks that showed convincing evidence of having been leamed against might have been seen in the shimmering moonlight—and they were about 80 far apart.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Postal Shower.

The postal shower is likely to become an institution. It is designed for the benefit of a friend who has gone to live in a strange place. The shower was originated by a woman living in St. Louis to encourage her son, a young lawyer, who had established an office in San Antonio, Tex. Knowing he was bashful the mother wrote to all her friends, asking that each one send a post card to him, with some cheering message. In many cases a friend would encourage her own friends to write also, and thus the list grew. The young man got so much mail matter that San Antonio people got to think he was a person of some consequence, and they took to him in great style. The "shower" worked so well in this instance that the story spread. Now the idea is gaining popularity by leaps and bounds and bids fair to spread while the supply of homesick friends holds out.